



SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS
COMMUNICATIONS

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sedgwick County Zoo Receives Settlement of \$850,000

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – At the October 16 Sedgwick County Commission meeting, the Board of Sedgwick County Commissioners approved to accept a settlement offer of \$850,000 for damages to a Sedgwick County Zoo exhibit. The County's former property insurance provider had previously declined to pay for snow damage that occurred in December 1999 to the South American Pampas/Australian Outback Exhibit. The Pampas/Outback has been closed since the damage occurred.

The Sedgwick County Zoological Society, which operates in partnership with Sedgwick County, decided to upgrade the Pampas/Outback both structurally and aesthetically by committing an additional \$250,000 for a tented roof. Completed in February 2002, the Pampas/Outback roof is now double the height in some areas. This will allow additional flight room for more birds and offer a better experience for Zoo visitors.

In July 2002, a Sedgwick County jury awarded full replacement costs as well as lost business income. The insurance company, prior to an appeal, offered a settlement amount of \$850,000.

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“We are pleased to get this matter settled so we can continue to focus our efforts on making this exhibit another one of the main attractions at the Sedgwick County Zoo,” said Sedgwick County Commission Chairman Ben Sciortino. “I am pleased that we have been able to come to an agreement that will allow us to make the necessary repairs.”

Presently the Sedgwick County Zoo is investing another \$500,000 on upgrades to animal exhibits, landscaping and visitor amenities within the Pampas/Outback. This exhibit is one of the five largest walk-through Aviaries in the United States. The walkway through the exhibit is 480 yards long and meanders among over 300 birds, 100 mammal specimens and a small assortment of reptiles. The Exhibit will now display many new species for the first time such as: Giant anteaters, Chacoan peccaries, Pudus, Carpet pythons and Hyacinth macaws. The grand reopening of the new and improved Pampas/Outback will take place Memorial Day weekend 2003.

The Sedgwick County Zoo has been recognized with national and international awards for successfully breeding threatened and endangered species. It's the number one family tourist attraction in Kansas, and is home to more than 2,500 animals of nearly 500 different species. The Zoo is located at 5555 Zoo Boulevard in Wichita, Kansas.

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